

## BOOKS ON EDUCATION

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6. On Education by Mulk Raj Anand

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# ON EDUCATION

BY  
MULK RAJ ANAND



SAHITYA CHAYANA  
NEW DELHI



Head of a Girl, by Rohini Khatau, aged 9 years,  
pupil of Mr. P. Dutt.

# ON EDUCATION

BY  
MULK RAJ ANAND

SAHITYA CHAYANA  
NEW DELHI

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For  
K. G. SAIYIDAIN

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11.6.96

Dear Ms. Vina Bhatia,

I had been away from home so the response to your note of no date has been delayed.

I am reassured that Sahitya Chayana is publishing books on education in Hindi and English for the benefit of slum children.

This is a noble undertaking and I would like to have a specimen copy of one of this books in English

Meanwhile, I am willing to give you the rights to publish my book entitled On Education provided the book is produced to professional standards with, I hope, some reproductions of children's drawings which I will suggest to you.

The format of the book may be kept on the previous publications.

May be you have a catalogue of your publications which I would like to see it.

Regards,

Vina Bhatia,  
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Sincerely

*Mulk Raj Anand*  
Mulk Raj Anand

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## PREFACE

Dear friends,

I will begin with my own experience. At the age of 12, from a second hand book shop I picked up a copy of 'Idgah', in a battered condition. I brought it home and straightened its pages to make it readable. After reading the book I could not stop myself from weeping. For a long time the images of tongs, toys and sweetshops kept on wandering in my mind. Even today I feel happy to give this book as a birthday gift to a child.

In giving 'Idgah' or any other book as a gift, I feel, that if children get to read simple, self explanatory literature, then, probably, they will not get stuck with comics.

To give a child gift of books implies giving them chance to wander in the colourful garden of words, to let them get absorbed in the words of good literature. Once a child gets introduced to the beautiful world of books, he gets addicted to life, whatever other media she may come across.

Childhood is the time when children should get the culture (sanskar) of books. Books received as gifts are preserved by children for years...it is the only inheritance of childhood.

And then children's Chacha Nehru also has said, 'I can not imagine a world without books. The culture of books among humans can never end. Books stay with him even when no one is with him.'

In publishing 'On Education' I am feeling very happy. First of all I want to thank Late Sri Mulk Raj Anand who gave a lovely letter of permission to print the book with a copy of the book.

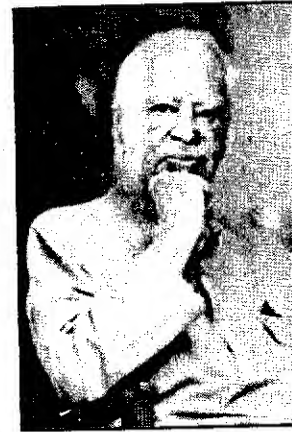
The book was published a long ago and is little known among educationists. It should have been republished, atleast when all these new experimental schools started appearing in the 80s and 90s. Still a good book is never too old.

Although it is a slim volume, it is extraordinarily perceptive. It gives a concise history of education in India. Then it gives a description and critic of Gandhi's 'Nai Taleem' and advocates a synthesis of Nai Taleem with Tagore's ideas of education through fine arts. There are some plates illustrating his concepts. This book may solve the puzzle about Mulk Raj Anand, how the author of 'Coolie' was also the editor of India's premier art journal 'Marg', for years!

In the end I want to say that it is not necessary for you to read the book. The book flows so smoothly that it will get read on its own!

July 6, 2010

VINA BHATIA  
(Literary Activist)  
Mob.: 9013510023



## MULK RAJ ANAND

(1905-2004)

Indian novelist, short-story writer, and art critic writing in English. Mulk Raj Anand was among the first writers to render Punjab and Hindustani idioms into English. Called the Zola or Balzac of India, Anand drew a realistic and sympathetic portrait of the poor of India. With Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan he has been regarded as one the "founding

fathers" of the Indian English novel.

Mulk Raj Anand was born in Peshawar, as the son of Lal Chand, a coppersmith and soldier, and Ishwar Kaur. Anand rebelled early on against his father's subservience to the British authorities. Mulk Raj Anand's literary career was launched by family tragedy, instigated by the rigidity of the caste system. His first prose essay was a response to the suicide of an aunt, who had been excommunicated by his family for sharing a meal with a Muslim.

Anand, who spent half his time in London and half in India, was drawn to the Indian independence movement. At the same time, he also supported freedom elsewhere around the globe and even travelled to Spain to volunteer in the Spanish Civil War. Anand returned to India in 1946, and continued with his prodigious literary output there. His work includes poetry and essay on a wide range of subjects, as well as autobiographies and novels. He also founded a literary magazine, "Marg" and taught in various universities.

His first main novel, "Untouchable", published in 1935, was a chilling expose of the day-to-day life of member of India's untouchable caste. It is the story of a single day in the life of Bakha, a toilet-cleaner, who accidentally bumps into a member of a higher caste.

This simple book, which captured the Punjabi and Hindi idiom in English was widely acclaimed and Anand won the reputation of being India's Charles Dickens. In Anand's second novel, Coolie (1936), he continues to describe the plight of India's poor by telling of a 15-year-old boy, trapped in servitude as a child labourer, who eventually

dies of tuberculosis. *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) describe an exploited peasant, who is killed while trying to protect his daughter from being raped by a British colonial official.

Anand's famous trilogy, *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940), and *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), was a strong protest against social injustices. The story follows the life of Lal Sing from adolescent rebellion through his experiences in World War I, to his return home and revolutionary activities.

Anand also published books on subjects as diverse as Marx and Engels in India, Tagore, Nehru, Aesop's fables, the Kama Sutra, erotic sculpture, and Indian ivories. Mulk Raj Anand died in Pune on September 28, 2004.

**Awards:** Leverhulme fellowship, 1940-42; World Peace Council prize, 1952; Padma Bhushan, India, 1968; Akademi prize, for *Morning Face*, 1970; Sahitya Academy award, 1974; Birla award; distinguished writer award, State Government of Maharashtra, India.

**D. Litt:** University of Delhi, University of Patiala, University of Andhra, University of Benaras, and University of Kanpur. Fellow, Indian Academy of Letters.

## PART : I

'Civilization' brings its penalties just as primitive life had its handicaps. The old societies were narrow and hidebound in convention and made for a simple, often monotonous, state of existence. The new industrial civilization, which has now spread all over the world, has defects inherent in its very complexity.

The basic factor in all civilizations, simple as well as complex, has been man, the individual in his relationship to other men, the group, society. But this relationship is always changing. Once upon a time man had to adjust himself simply to a few other men, the family, the tribe among which he lived, and to the elements of nature, earth, water, air, from which he eked a living. Now, though he still has to adjust himself to nature from which he gets sustenance, man has also to adapt himself to all those highly skilled processes which he has evolved to produce an abundance of goods to increase his happiness and ease.

The vast change which occurred in the outer life of man when the steam engine put the plough into the shade has not, however, been accompanied by a corresponding inner change in the heart and mind of man.

Now, throughout the ages, the education of the young has been encouraged, so that the growing members of the human family may learn to adapt themselves to society, so that they may be able to inherit the world of their forefathers, develop it and live in it. Education, therefore, is a basic institution of society. And the aims and ideals of any particular society determine the aims and ideals of the educational system, which it maintains, the structure of that system and the context of the education which it gives to its citizens.

At the turn of the century, even before the first World War, thinking men all over the world were beginning to see the possibilities



of destruction implicit in the machine civilization if it was allowed to outstrip man's capacity to control it. And they groped round for new ways of educating the young so that men could arise who could cope with the problems of the new age. But the holocaust of 1914-18 dashed all these hopes, because it revealed the bankruptcy of commercial civilization and of the individuals who composed it. The long weekend between the two World Wars, and the intense fratricide which characterized the second carnage, showed that the cancer of self-interest, the philosophy of selfishness, of 'might is right', has spread very deep into the commercial, practical and political life of the civilized world. And those among the survivors who are decent look on helplessly at the spectacle of a world where the most primitive impulses of hate and fear have survived, side by side with the enormous scientific and mechanical progress we have made.

How can we combine the benefits of the complex civilization which the world has evolved with human values? Must factories mean slums and idiocy? Should the radio and press spread only lies or half-lies? And should aeroplanes be used to bombard the innocent and guilty alike? Must the atom be used to destroy or to build? These are questions which all of us will have to face if we do not want more war, more crime, more sexual misery, more cruelty, more hypocritical respectability, more frustration and promiscuity—if we do not want the world to be the hell we have made of it!

I think it is unlikely that the tired, old and half-dead men of our civilization will face these problems. In fact, it is a poor look-out for the world of which they are masters. But I have still some hope in those of my own age, the under-forties, because, having seen the debacles of two World Wars, we may make the effort to correct some of our mistakes, or, at any rate, give our children the kind of education that will root out hatred and sadism from which spring hanging and war. This may to some extent lessen the avoidable pain and suffering of the world.

Now, what is the kind of education that might help the human race to survive and continue, with some degree of biological and human efficiency, against the unharnessed forces of nature and man's bestiality?

It is obvious that it is not classes and gym, nor punishments

and exams, which will make our children avoid the mistakes we have been committing. Every educationist who has given deep thought to the problem of the 20<sup>th</sup> century knows that the ideal of education is freedom, freedom from fear, freedom from hatred and perversion, that is to say, the freedom which helps the mind to be free and to live amicably in any social group. If this is true, then it is clear that text-books and grammar are not enough, but that education has to be construed in terms of the methods by which the creative urges, or the potential dynamics, in every child are recognized and through which these creative urges are allowed to express themselves.

There are those, of course, in our modern world who deny that every child has creative energy. They are mainly biased old men, who belong to the dying order. Then there are those who assert that the psychological type of every child is predetermined at birth and that environment only moulds the innate potentialities of man. Perhaps the latter have some part of the truth.

For, undoubtedly, there are certain hereditary instincts in the human race. But the development of human society, even to its present inadequate standards of achievement, shows that environment does play an important part in the moulding of human character. If environmental influences be conceded, then whether the child is born with the urge to be good or to be bad, it is possible that the encouragement of adequate social habits contributes something at least to the maturing of human personality. And if this be so, education can be so contrived as to promote the better habits rather than the worse. At any rate, there is the creative energy, incipient in every child, the mere will to live, which must be negotiated into those channels which are helpful to the development of a human being and create human values, which are themselves the only test for judging whether a society is good or bad.

What is the education, then, that we do want for our children?

The answer is that we want the kind of education which releases their potential creative energies, which does not impose anything on them that they do not want, but which liberates them instead, which demands little from them but gives them much, which is not taking it out of the children to appease our own frustrations, but which is giving, without any ulterior motive, to the extent to which it is humanly



possible to give. Naturally, such an education is built on our real love of the children, and not on false love, which is hatred. And, inevitably, it encourages the social good in them rather than the evil. Concretely, such an education does not consist of adult moralizing and the exercise of an authority which is mostly the rationalization of our self-complacent belief in our own importance and from the point of view of which we think children good or bad to the extent they fulfil our adult standards of respectable behaviour. No-sermons, lectures, cautionary don'ts and corporal punishment only encourage the asocial tendencies in children and often make them into criminals. And the more we suppress the natural savage instincts in children, the more we reap the harvest of their later expression of these instincts in violence and war. Suppression and repression and cane-driven sense are not education at all. Real education must start by asking, 'What is a child? What is its nature? What does it want to do? And how can it adjust itself to home, the town, the country, the world and the universe, and be an individual in the world community?'

Obviously, a child is noisy by nature, averse to soap and water, prone to movement from the sheer exuberance of physical health and vitality. Has it then occurred to us that we must provide the child a school which meets its natural demands? Have we thought of what kind of school the child wants rather than what kind of seminary it ought to have? We know, of course, that children like to play and we accordingly organize games. But have we even realized that childhood is playhood and that children are happier when they can think of everything as a game, a sport. Instead, we emphasize umpires and referees and discipline and punish a child who turns truant from physical drill, and goes catching hoopoes or butterflies. We say, 'Children ought to be seen and not heard.' We teach the little ones manners, so that they can greet their aunts and uncles with joined hands and polite words. We seek to elevate the infant, not knowing in our confounded pride that no exalted talk can reach the depths of the child's psyche, that, however consciously it might obey and approximate to our rules of conduct, its unconscious nature is beyond all sermonizing and that the unconscious is a far more dynamic and powerful factor in the development of the child than outer hypocrisy. We belong to the obtuse older generations who do not see how

easily we can exalt our perversities and shortcomings into categorical imperatives. And it is only comparatively recently that Mr Bertrand Russell, Mr A.S. Neil, the poet Tagore and the Soviet teachers have begun to question the premises on which the old schooling was built. Even now the vast bulk of parents and teachers have not recognized that if a child steals, for instance, no amount of moralizing is going to cure it, nor any amount of beating; but that it is likely to give up this unsocial habit if it is given a shining silver coin every time it steals, and that in that way it will most likely be cured, for the gift of money touches what is in the child's unconscious, the desire for love that makes it steal, symbolically. Persuasion and explanation are likely to bring better acceptance of social rules and responsibilities than the current methods of obtaining good behaviour.

The criterion of all education has, therefore, to be the nature of the child in a growing world. And we have to put the deeply hidden motive first and synthesize the inner life of the human being with his outer social life. The ideal of education is freedom. And the method to achieve it is love, and love, and more love, as well as service and devotion of the old to the task of bringing up and educating the young.

## PART : II

## 1

I am afraid that all these elementary questions which are important to any sane scheme of education have not been posed with any degree of consistency in most parts of the world.

In our own country, India, politically a large province of the British Empire for so long and spiritually a suburb of London, we have been too handicapped to think about these problems at all. We are still a people who enjoy only the smallest percentage of literacy, and we have so far been excusably stupid about the whole matter of education. It is true that we began to talk round the situation about fifty years or so ago, in the wake of our freedom movement. But we haven't got anywhere near the deep roots of the problem, except in the writings and example of Rabindranath Tagore, who founded the model school and university at Shantiniketan, Bolpur, Bengal. And even now, with the advent of responsible government in our country, we seem to be tackling educational reforms in a manner so light-hearted that there appears to be no realization of the fact that an educational emergency exists.

Let us briefly trace the story of our mishaps in the educational field and let us see what has already been said and done about it.

## 2

I suppose every one has by now heard of Macaulay's notorious Minute which was to lead to the foundation of that system of education which has prevailed in our country till now.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the tradition of Indian culture was still intact in literature, science and the creative arts. The earlier officials of the East India Company had often employed their leisure in the study of these 'fanciful' arts and sciences. And, less because they had better imaginations than their successors and more

because in the period of the foundation of British rule they deemed it necessary to know the people, they displayed a deep interest in Indian learning. Warren Hastings had been so fascinated by the methods of 'self-hypnotism' outlined in the *Bhagavad Gita* that he employed various Pandits to explain Hindu religion and philosophy to him. Sir William Jones translated *Sakuntala* and the *Cloud Messenger*. Horace Hayman Wilson, Prinsep, Colebrook, Wilkins and Duncan had all sought information about the rich, wise people with whom they had come to trade and had visions of a 'union of Hindu and European learning', in seminaries where the peoples of India would be given, through the medium of their sacred language, a taste of English literature and science.

An infatuation like this, on the part of so many brilliant men, with the weird hieroglyphics of a people who joined their hands to other gods than Jesus Christ was bound to evoke resentment among the English community in India. The Christian missionaries went about saying that the crazy preoccupation of the Orientalists with the customs and conventions of the heathen was postponing the day when India could be won for Christ through a study of English life and literature. The Directors of Johan Company declared: 'We suspect that there is little in Hindu and Muhammadan literature that is useful.' And they stressed the need for effecting economies in the general administration of the Government by the creation of Indian clerks, for the day-to-day work of the Government.

About the year 1834, the rivalry between the Orientalists and the Anglicists had crystallized sharply enough for a passage of arms to take place in the Committee of Public Instruction, which had been appointed to discuss the best way of utilizing the \$10,000 a year set apart from the revenues of the country by Parliament, for the 'revival and promotion of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences'.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, but lately arrived in India as a Member of the Governor-General's Council, became the chief spokesman of the Anglicists and, as a member of the Committee of Public Instruction, has left behind a summary of their views in the remarkable Minute on Indian education, which, written in that

inimitable style of his, so loud and so vehement, could not but carry every one with it as during his younger days it seems to have carried his father, who, on reading one of his son's essays, said:

'Vociferated logic kills me quite;

A noisy man is always in the right.'

It was as a result of this minute, when it became law, that our current system of education arose.

The reader will recognize below the purple patch generally associated with the style of Lord Macaulay.

'I have no knowledge,' writes Macaulay, 'of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have never found one (among the Orientalists) who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. I certainly never met with any Orientalists who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and Sanskrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations. And when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded and general principles investigated, the superiority of the European becomes absolutely immeasurable.'

Lord Acton has said that 'Macaulay knew nothing respectable before the seventeenth century, nothing of religion, philosophy, science or art'. That may be an extreme view, but, on his own confession, he certainly could not have known very much of Eastern literatures. His partisanship in the controversy with the Orientalists presumably biased him against using the light thrown upon Hindu and Muhammadan literature by Wilkins, Jones, Prinsep and Wilson. Or, it may be, that he was a more orthodox Christian than has hitherto been recognized and was blinded by his religious zeal. For, does he not, after taking credit for the religious neutrality of his Government, go on to say to his antagonists who had urged that Arabic and Sanskrit should be taught because they are the languages in which the sacred books of a hundred million people are written: "The oriental language is barren of useful knowledge and full of monstrous superstitions. Are we to teach false history, false astronomy, false medicine, because we found it in company with a false philosophy?"

But whether his major premise was wrong or the minor premise manifestly absurd, Macaulay had made up his mind about the conclusion: 'English,' he said, 'was better worth knowing than Sanskrit



Landscape by a child under 14 years. 'This colourful picture is a characteristic example of the child's idea of nature. The colouring reveals a sensitiveness to spatial values and the composition in all its oddity is integral to the temperament of a pure visionary: stars, the moon and hills all jostled together to be contained in the same picture.'



or Arabic. The literature of England is now more valuable than that of Classical antiquity. What the Greek and Latin were to the contemporaries of More and Ascham, our tongue is to be to the people of India.'

And inductive proof was not wanting in the application of this theory. He pointed to Russia as the instance of a country which 'within a hundred and twenty years' had 'emerged from the ignorance and barbarism in which it was sunk to take its place among civilized communities...The languages of Western Europe civilized Russia. I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindoo what they have done for the Tartar.'

Several well-known Orientalists have criticized Macaulay for placing the English language on a par with the Classical Greek and Latin, Sanskrit and Arabic languages by pointing out that, with its flexible structures, syntax and diction, it is much more aptly comparable to the vernacular languages of Western Europe and to the Hindi and Hindustani languages of India. They had reason on their side.

But Lord William Bentinck, then Governor-General of India, agreed with Macaulay as a gallant champion of a higher type of 'civilization.' He considered English the fittest substitute for all classical Oriental languages, in view of the facilities it would provide for easier commercial and industrial intercourse between East and West. Of course, he 'read very little', he said, 'and that much with pain', but then he had Macaulay's evidence about Sanskrit and Arabic literature as being mere 'masses of waste paper'. So he promulgated an ordinance, decreeing 'that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone.'

Col. Lees, a distinguished Anglo-Indian educationist, has attacked Macaulay for misinterpreting the Parliamentary clause that originated the controversy which Bentinck finally sealed. He suggested that the word 'revival' used therein meant the revival of Oriental learning and that the word 'introduction' meant the introduction of Western literature and science. And he took Macaulay to task for his

tactlessness. Lord Auckland tried to make good the loss of prestige sustained by Oriental learning by granting money for researches. And Sir Thomas Munro sought to apologize for Macaulay by asserting that 'if civilisation were to be made an article of commerce between the two countries, England would soon be heavily in debt.'

But Macaulay's minute and Bentinck's ordinance may be contemplated in the spirit of their time, in the light of the brave words of John Lawrence who said: 'We are here by our own moral superiority, by the force of circumstances, by the Will of Providence, and in doing the best for the people, we are bound by our own conscience and not theirs.'

So the scholars who were busy with Indian classical studies in the seminaries of our country, the artisans who were busy creating the subtle crafts for which the Indies had been famous, the alchemists and the practitioners of the indigenous systems of medicine, all had to shut up shop. And the heritage bequeathed to our forefathers in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and the mediaeval regional languages became a closed book. The religious and philosophical systems which were our great accomplishments were rendered obsolete, and the poetry which was integral to our temperament was baulked by English rhythms. The greatest tragedy was that our whole main tradition was broken. And for a hundred and fifty years we were to remain neither Orientals nor Westerners, ghosts wandering about in a no man's land, reaching out now to the dim past and then to the foreign landscapes of Vilayats beyond the seas. And the vacuum was of course filled with a montage of English imagery combined to the rhythm of the Indian mind, a hotch-potch of which the hall-mark was bad taste. From the poetry of Kalidasa we descended to the ribaldry of the Limerick or badly written spun verse. And to add insult to injury, after having reduced us to an abject position, the English went about making fun of the Indian intelligentsia. The Babu, the learned man, began to be regarded as 'the traditional humorist of India'. 'The benefits of education,' they said, 'were manifold!' And they gave examples of the Indian's love of sonorous phrase by compiling anthologies of howlers committed by clerks in Government offices.

## 3

In 1844, the manufacture of Babus was proceeding well enough through this kind of education for Lord Hardinge to recommend that in every possible case a preference shall be given in the selection of candidates for public employment to those who have been educated in the institutions thus established and especially to those who have distinguished themselves therein by more than ordinary degree of merit and attainment.

The difficulties of recruiting personnel in England to fill subordinate posts in the Government of India were thus solved. And, as the economic urge of the middle sections in India found some degree of gratification through this, a mood of abject acceptance of the current education system possessed the well-to-do. So that the British Indian University became the Mecca of all youths and jobbery flourished and, with it, nepotism and the bureaucracy—the 'steel ring' of British rule in India. The cultivation of the mind and body, the development of character, culture, sensitiveness and awareness of life, was forgotten in a mere attempt at literacy in the English language.

Soon, however, the supply of Babus from the British Indian universities began to exceed the demand and generation of young graduates continued to swell the ranks of the unemployed in India, expropriated from the indigenous culture like the peasants from their lands, and equally deprived of any real knowledge of European ideals—inhabitants of a world which was under fire from both the opposing sides.

'If education is the transmission of life from the living, through the living, to the living,' wrote an independent critic about this debacle, 'then we do not know how to describe the system of teaching that prevails here. It is carrying death from the dead, through the dead, to the dead.'

## 4

In 1882, the Government appointed a commission to inquire into the whole problem of Indian education. This commission pointed its finger at the obvious and glaring defects of the prevailing system and, with a profound pertinacity of instinct, sought to shift the

emphasis of the education system from the Babu-producing university to the elementary school. But, fundamentally, it was working within a scheme which precluded reform, and, apart from minor and paltry changes, nothing much was altered. The colleges multiplied and higher education was exalted, as it had been before, and continued to produce a lower species of humans.

A bill introduced into the Imperial Legislature by the well-known reformer Gokhale in 1910 for the introduction of free and compulsory education was thrown out by an over-whelming majority of the Government of India's nominated members.

The studied attempt of the Imperialist bureaucracy to keep our people in the dark owed itself to the ingrained belief of our British rulers that the more Indians became educated the more they would become discontented.

It was a policy not very different from the one which the British ruling class had adopted in the development of their own education system at home. For there, too, they had stood against enlightenment, side by side with the Church, 'to keep the poor from being a nuisance to the state', until the pressure of the people through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries compelled wrung-out concessions from the reluctant authorities.

The ruling classes which were capable of doing this at home were not to be expected to be any more decent and generous abroad. The British Government, recruiting its cadres from the public schools of Britain, deliberately thwarted all attempts at reform by delaying tactics, by appointing commissions which sat for long years and by shelving their findings.

Almost every leader of political and social thought in our country struggled to bring a rational view of the implications of the degrading education forced on us before the public, but the autocracy was deaf to the pleas of enlightened opinion, because any large measure of education seemed to its custodians the thing that would surely and inevitably bring about the end of British rule.

As a result of the agitation and protest in the country against this organized suppression, the visit of George V to India in 1911 was utilized to indicate a new policy 'to spread over the land a network of schools and colleges, from which will go forth loyal and manly

and useful citizens, able to hold their own in industries and agriculture and all vocations of life'. The annual allotment was increased and in 1913 the Government declared a new Indian education policy which recommended that 'there should be a large expansion of lower primary schools teaching the three R's, with drawing, knowledge of the village map, nature study and physical exercise'. The authorities recognized the principle of free compulsory education, but, with a characteristic respect for 'reasons of decisive weight' did not put it into practice.

There was an increased emphasis on primary education in the years that followed, and most of the provinces adopted education acts to expand it. But actually free primary education did not come to be accepted.

## 5

In the wake of the great freedom movement that began through the first non-violent, non-co-operation campaign of Mahatma Gandhi in 1919, a greater self-consciousness was naturally engendered about the paucities of the Indian education system, as about the denial of political and economic rights to our people. With a radicalism which was for the first time to rally all advanced opinion round the single objective of ending British rule, Gandhiji proposed that students should turn their backs on the British Indian system of education and join national schools and colleges. A number of these parallel institutions were set up in various parts of India, from among which the Kashi Vidyapith at Benares, the Tilak Vidyapith in Poona and the Jamia Millia have survived, organs of education which have produced some of the most enlightened men in our national life.

But Gandhiji's thinking on this matter did not stop with the national orientation that he was seeking to give to higher education. As and when he had time to enjoy a little rest from the major non-co-operation campaigns, he devoted his attention frequently to the problem of education as such, that is to say, to education in its earlier and basic forms. Not being an expert, however, he often sought the advice of the best educationists in the country.

In 1937 Mahatma Gandhi actually outlined a scheme for elementary education for the whole of India and got the Indian

National Congress to appoint a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain to work out the details of a programme.

This Committee is the greatest single step forward taken in the discussion of the whole problem of basic education in our country. It set out a truly sincere and noble preamble to its recommendations, seeking to make Indian children 'responsive to the realistic elements of the present situation and to nourish them on life-giving creative ideals'. It desired to promote among them 'a keen sense of personal worth, dignity, efficiency and the will to strengthen in them the desire for self-improvement and social service in a co-operative community'.

The basic education proposed under this scheme is intended for seven years, between the ages of seven and fourteen. Figuratively speaking, at the stage at which it gives roots to the lives of young children, i.e. from two and a half to seven years, it is called Pre-Basic Education. In its main process, the time when the roots are sprouting, it is called Basic Education. When it throws up branches into the lives of adults above fourteen years of age it becomes Post-Basic and Adult Education.

But, throughout, this education is conceived in terms of learning by doing, through activity and work. And as such it ushers an absolutely new era in educational reform. In fact, opening out as it does a vision of the whole of our people, from infants to adults, learning to grow into strong healthy trees, the scheme becomes the harbinger of a new social order in which every person will play his part as a creative entity.

If, however, in what follows I offer a criticism of some of the assumptions underlying this scheme, I do so with reverence for the framers of the scheme, and in a constructive attempt to put forward an idea of our present-day needs which are more complex and urgent than it was possible to outline before the horrors of the second World War taught us certain lessons about human psychology which we had not learnt before.

While any just person must pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, who was the chief inspiration behind the Wardha Scheme, it is pertinent here to notice that the part of the scheme in which the influence of his technical ideas is most obvious are somewhat

unsatisfactory, as they are not informed by any extensive knowledge of the minds of children. On the other hand, the proposals which are the result of Dr. Zakir Hussain's researches are actual, concrete and bear evidence to a deep awareness of the need for creative education for the young.

Both the minds behind the scheme are, of course, agreed that the best way of learning is by doing. But while Dr Zakir Hussain's thought is influenced by considerations about the inner development of human personality for its own sake, there is a distinct emphasis in Mahatma Gandhi's conception on the practical results which he expects from children who are learning by doing.

Gandhiji wants education to be self-supporting. 'For it to be self-supporting is the acid test,' he says, 'the crux.' If we ply the *charka* and let the shuttle fly on our looms, he feels we can produce yarn and cloth. And, as we need all the yarn and cloth we can produce, we must get our schools to produce their quota and practise the principle of 'earn while you learn'. If we drive the plough and work with all the other instruments on a plot of land, we produce grain, fruit, vegetables and a variety of crops. And, as our need for these products is great, let every one, big and small, produce them. Besides, the *charka*, the loom and the plough are not only machines but pieces of history, living and growing things. As our children work with these, they will learn to know these instruments as well as the history of which they are the products. History and science will in this way no longer be 'bookish' but living and glowing realities.

And, in order to ensure learning by doing, he wants to build up education on the pivot of a basic craft. He proposes the abolition of the distinction between primary, middle and high school education. Instead, he recommends elementary education, extending over a period of seven years, or longer, and covering subjects up to the matriculation standard, except English—all centred on a craft. 'The state takes charge of the child at seven and returns it to the family as an earning unit,' the Mahatma writes. And he continues: 'You have to train the boy in one occupation or another. Round this special occupation you will train up his mind, his body, his handwriting, his artistic sense and so on. He will be master of the craft he learns.' The crafts recommended are spinning and weaving, carpentry, agriculture,



fruit and vegetable gardening, leather work and other crafts, such as are in tune with local and geographical conditions. The importance of the craft is stressed in the actual time-table to be followed in the school, for it claims 3 hours and 30 minutes out of a total of 5 hours and 30 minutes, the remaining time being apportioned in the following manner: 40 minutes for music, drawing and arithmetic; 40 minutes for the mother tongue; 30 minutes for social studies and general science; 10 minutes for recess.

The most important part of this scheme, according to Gandhiji, is that it is self-supporting. The goods produced in the schools are compulsorily bought by the State. And, of course, the prosperity of the school depends on how much it produces in the way of marketable goods. If the student thus tends to become a child-serf, the Mahatma answers : 'God did not create us to eat, drink and be merry, but to earn our bread in the sweat of our brow.'

Now all one can say about this scheme is that it destroys the basic assumption of learning by doing by requiring material results from the doing, i.e. the profit motive enters schooling and vitiates the tender minds of children whose genius lies, in the light of all acute thinking, in the potential capacity for creative play they have, in the dynamic energy with which they are possessed. While Dr Zakir Hussain, with his insight into the child's mind, would wish to exploit for educative purposes the resources implicit in craft work, Mahatma Gandhi's emphasis leads to its exploitation for commercial purposes.

The Mahatma is not unaware of the criticism levelled against him, that the scheme is sordid in so far as it unduly emphasizes exchange value in the life of the child. But he avers, "There is nothing wrong about economic calculations. True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard. Just as all true ethics, to be worth its name, must at the same time be also good economics."

But what exactly are the inner reasons for Gandhiji's drafting of such a scheme?

It is obvious that the Mahatma seeks to solve the problem of India's poverty by training everyone of India's young citizens to contribute to the national wealth. And he has particularly in mind the village children, for he dreams of an India in which we shall

revert to the ancient, closed, self-sufficient village economy, independent of machine civilization and devoid of class hatred and exploitation, a utopia built up on the reconciliation of the poor with the rich through the doctrine of trusteeship, an ideal State called Ram-Raj, non-violent in word and deed.

Now, those who live in the modern world and know how the operation of the laws of capitalist economics has made for imperialism, how the urge of countries which came in early on industrial civilization has been to enslave vast parts of the world in order to flood them with cheap machine-made goods, and how the conquest and control of colonies and spheres of influence as exclusive markets make for violence and war, know that the solution of our present difficulties is a socialist world and not the revival of a feudal State, however we might miss the old graces. The dream of perfecting good little village minds on the basis of Khadi and non-violence, so that these morons vegetate within the limits of their self-sufficient communities, is not only impossible in an India where every village is already inundated with cheap machine-made goods produced by foreign and indigenous capitalists, but is likely to bring about the very opposite of all those qualities which the Mahatma seeks to create in the average Indian. For the discipline of the three and a half hours' craft-work and two hours' lessons, with only a ten-minute recess, is not unlike the routine forced on the people of Japan with the result that those very 'gentle,' and seemingly 'polite' 'well-mannered' Japanese citizens were capable, during the second World War, of inflicting tortures not even thought of by the Devil himself. To the puritanical mind of the Mahatma, lacking that awareness of the deeper creative urges of man which distinguished his contemporary Tagore, it does not occur that the discipline he inculcates suppresses every genuine and free impulse so that it is likely to bring its nemesis whenever the breaking point is reached. Gandhiji does not see that for all his twenty-five year's campaigning for non-violence, not even his immediate followers believe in it or practice it. And he has little appreciation of the fact that it is the authoritarian religion which he exalts and the doctrine of sexual control which he preaches that might have given to the atrocities in the recent Hindu-Muslim riots the diabolical and inhuman character that was manifested there. For 'the good', who build their

'goodness' on suppression and control and repression, are potentially evil and their hidden urges will be out once the sanctions of conventional religion and morality have broken down.

Politically, this scheme is inept because it seeks to build up an India living in complete isolation from a militarized world, a kind of non-violent heaven in which our arithmetic, our science, our history, will have a non-violent approach and the problems in those subjects will be coloured by non-violence. And our people will, of course, be open to attack from any nation which does not believe in pacifism and covets its natural wealth or its markets.

Economically, the whole conception of a homespun India, rejecting the machine, is at this late stage in the history of industrial civilization completely moribund. For the machine is already there, a machine which is a great improvement on the earlier tools of human society, the *charka*, the loom and the plough. And the problem is not how to set about non-co-operating with it, but how best man can utilize it, without being mastered by it. Under the conditions of the modern world it is also inconceivable how a country of four hundred millions can raise its standard of living without a soundly planned industrial-cum-agrarian economy. And in this context it is not clear how the Mahatma, obsessed by the ideal of the simple life, imagines that every one else will reject the complex, rich and potentially plentiful civilization which is already at our doors if only we can alter our social organization in an egalitarian manner.

Culturally, this scheme tends to bring forth a type of mind hardly aware of circles of life beyond our immediate ken, a mind in which enforced habits will leave violences which are explosive. The free mind which has come to be regarded as the ideal of education is negated by the stringent rules of the Wardha code, and the development of the human personality does not get any chance whatever. The mechanical idealism of the Mahatma succeeds in creating the very opposite of what it intends to do, amass a nation of 'dead souls' who will have bargained away their lives from the age of seven to anyone who is clever enough to exploit them to his own advantage, be he one of our millowners or some power-crazed politician at New Delhi.

## 6

A scheme very similar to Mahatma Gandhi's known as the Vidya Mandir, but eschewing the idea of every school being self-supporting, was evolved by the Congress leaders of the Central Provinces and inaugurated there by the then Congress Government on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1937. In this, financial support was given through a grant of land sufficient in area to give the teacher a living wage according to the locality in which the school was situated, the living wage being ascertained as fifteen rupees per mensem. The income of the school could be augmented through charities and grants of grain which could be deposited in banks and administered by the elders. Also, the proceeds of the central industry taught and practised in the school, as well as Government aid at critical junctures, were ensured. The scheme was, however, never put into practice, for long.

## 7

A fairly wholesome attitude to the problems of education was taken by the Wood-Abbot Committee, set up by the Government of India in 1936 to report on the conditions and possibilities of improving Indian education, specially in regard to vocational training. Of course, the report went to the dead letter office that is the Secretariat at Delhi and nothing came of it.

Messrs S. H. Wood and A. Abbot, who were liberal British educationists, declared with sound good sense: 'We regard the reform of the content of general education as being even more important than a reorganisation of the framework of educational reform.'

Mr Wood, who wrote the section dealing with general education, suggested that the children in the primary schools should be entrusted as far as possible to women, who have the competence, the sympathy and the understanding necessary for the education of young children.

As far as the content of education is concerned, Mr Wood felt that it is idle to expect the younger generation to make a contribution to the good life of their country 'unless as individuals they are offered satisfying personal and social experiences in the school'. 'Literacy,' he said, going to the extreme of emphasis, 'is not the primary aim of education in schools. Concentration on literacy is a mistake.' 'Conning books,' he continues, 'learning by heart, and chanting in

unison, have their legitimate place in the disciplines of learning but they do not by themselves constitute an education for young children.'

Thus he suggests a curriculum which, besides formal education, includes 'acting and singing, physical exercises, games and dancing, nature study and the care of flowers and, it may be, animal drawing and making things'. The creative elements in this education are emphasized when Mr Wood makes a distinction between mere naturalistic copying in art and original invention. 'It is a waste of opportunity to ask children to make an elephant from a mould when there is material available for each child to fashion his own elephant.' And the implications of this attitude in terms of an active, as against a passive, school are drawn with a clarity, and concreteness which are highly commendable. 'Our object', Mr Wood wrote, 'has been not to decry instruction but to plead for the inclusion of activity as part of the educational process, in the conviction that for boys of this age "doing" is the beginning of "learning"...The work of children in classes III and IV should be adapted to the increasing capacities and interests of the children, but it should be based on the fact that children of eight, nine and ten years of age are growing rapidly in body, mind and spirit and that it is the function of the school at this stage to minister to their growth by enriching experiences as well as by book learning.' Similarly, in the Middle and High Schools, Mr Wood recommended a schooling replete with more complex and vital opportunities.

A very major defect of our educational system has been the training and selection of teachers. Mr Wood laid his finger on this sore spot when he said: 'Decisions are too often taken and appointments and promotions too often made on grounds not concerned primarily with the welfare of the schools and of the children in them but to placate or promote political, communal or family interests.'

In order to overcome 'this major tragedy in India' Mr Wood stressed the importance of proper training of teachers. The training colleges should concern themselves with the social 'why' of education, as well as with the technical 'how' of teaching itself. That is the only way in which the teacher will recognize his responsibilities as an educator and understand the significance of the school in the life of

the community. And only in this way will he realize the dignity of his profession. Teacher training should be both technical and cultural and refresher courses should be given to enable the teacher to stimulate his curiosity and to sustain his morale.

Mr Wood further suggested that the practice of promoting university professors to inspectorship of schools be discouraged and that cadres for this important service be called from among school teachers. And he suggested that the more responsible inspectors should have opportunities of studying educational practice and methods of inspection in other countries. It is desirable also that carefully selected teachers should pay visits abroad.

As for the medium of instruction, Mr Wood recommended the mother tongue, but gave English 'its extremely important place as a compulsory first language in the High School'.

Altogether the Wardha report and the Wood-Abbot inquiry gave a good lead to all educationists in this country in devising a new educational policy.

## 8

The spirit of inquiry into the problems of basic education which is about in our country is contagious. So that we find that even in so forsaken a province as the Punjab the Minister of Education wrote in 1937:

'We in the Punjab are, however, convinced that any scheme of educational reconstruction, if it is to be really beneficial to the people, must begin with the reorientation of the elementary system of education. This is the sheet-anchor of an educational structure of the country, in fact, the seed time of education itself, but it has not been paid the attention it has deserved.'

And he offered concrete proposals:

'The courses of study for the primary standard will be ruralized, made self-sufficient and overhauled with a definite objective which is the aim and basis of primary education. It will have an agricultural and vocational bias and a bearing on the conditions of life of the students. Besides instruction in the 3 R's, lessons will be given in a practical manner in civics, co-operative principles, laws of health and sanitation, improved methods of agriculture and, last but not least,

the multifarious programme of rural uplift. The system of education will be based on community work, more on actual observation of facts and things rather than on mere reading and cramming of a few text-books. The ideal that we have set before ourselves is that of a rural primary school which is the centre of village life and a powerful vehicle of social emancipation, economic improvement and agricultural development.

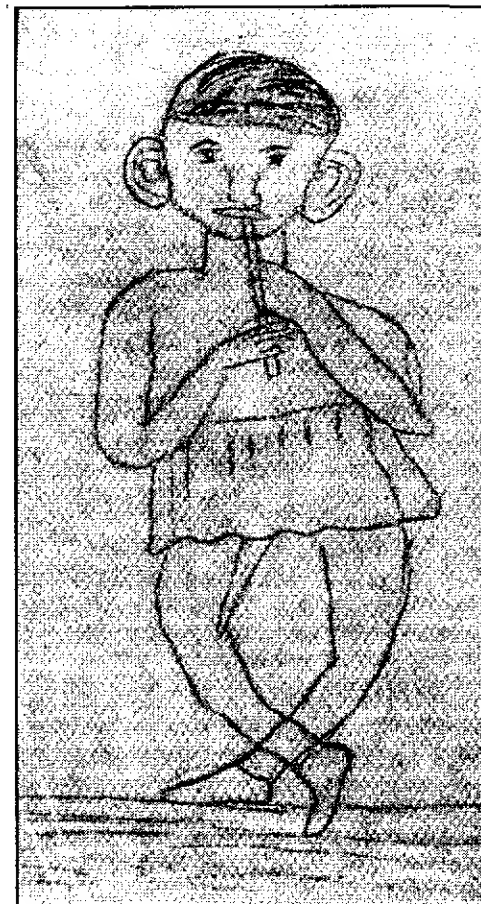
The Punjab Government actually set up a committee in pursuance of this policy, to suggest and define broad principles in the planning of suitable syllabi and curricula for the primary and middle departments. This committee utilized the existing schemes, namely, the Wardha, the Vidya Mandir and the Wood-Abbot reports, and devised a syllabus with some awareness of the problems of an adequate educational system. But it has not been put into practice until now.

### 9

A synthesis of the best elements of all these schemes and related integrally to the Wardha and Wood-Abbot proposals for free primary education was achieved by John Sargent, who was appointed by the Government of India to carry out a new policy at the Centre. Subject to the financial stringencies which have always characterized the nation-building departments of the Imperial Government, Sir John Sargent is seeking to put into effect the best elements of all the plans outlined above, specially the teaching of the largest number of teachers in the shortest possible time. But things in New Delhi and Simla proceed at the speed of the imperial elephants!

### 10

The sub-committee on education set up by the National Planning Committee, outlining a national system of technical education and scientific research in India, has also recently published as report. "The first problem in educational reconstruction", it says, 'is the liquidation of illiteracy. The Wardha scheme of primary or basic education for the whole people is the best that has yet been framed and we have to accept it as the first stage in the whole system of education.'



Boy Playing Flute, by  
Master Mangesh, aged 11 years,  
Fellowship School, Bombay  
Teacher : Mr. P. Dutt.

But the Planning Committee's report wisely repudiates those elements in the Wardha scheme which owed themselves to the innocence of Mahatma Candhi. For instance, the suggestion that a child should learn a craft by the end of the school career to start a vocational life is considered spiritually harmful to the child, as vocation thus tends to become the principal object of education. The Planning Committee is equally forthright in its rejection of the exchange idea in the Wardha scheme, according to which the current expenditure of the school is expected to be met by the sale of the goods produced in the technical section. The Committee emphasizes that these schools should be a direct burden on the State.

Primary education, covering a period of seven years, says the report, should be free and compulsory for all children and such schools should be co-educational. The medium of instruction suggested is, of course, the mother tongue.

After the primary course of seven years, secondary schools for general arts and sciences of three to four years' course are proposed. And these should prepare students for admission to the university or higher technical or professional courses if they opt for higher education. Though the medium of instruction is throughout to be the mother tongue, the study of Western languages, specially English, is to be encouraged at this stage.

According to the report, a regular sifting of students is to be made after completion of the primary school career. Only those, intellectually fitted will enter the secondary schools, and the rest might join what are called 'continuation schools' for training in arts and crafts and industries, such as drawing, design, general economics, civics, accounts and physical culture.

From the secondary schools, students may enter either the Universities for arts and science courses, or engineering and technology institutes, or medical and other professions. After University education there is provision for post-graduate and research work.

## 11

The actual situation which all these reports seek to ameliorate is still very grim. An agricultural country, India still remains the most backward nation in the world from the point of view of literacy and

education. While the figure for literacy in even a comparatively illiterate country such as pre-war Poland was 79%, India could only muster a bare 11%. There are 217 cities in India and 6,55,899 villages. Out of its total population of 38,89,97,955 (1931 census) a total of 33,93,01,902 people live in villages. That is to say, seven out of every eight people reside in villages. And it is in the rural areas that illiteracy abounds. For altogether there are 1,90,000 primary and elementary schools in India, i.e., one school to every three villages. So that the majority of the peoples in India are denied the facilities of elementary education. The proportion of female literacy is negligible. And what education there is in the rural areas is controlled by District Boards which lack funds and initiative. The schools are lodged in buildings which are unhygienic and mostly unfit for human habitation. Naturally, under such unhealthy conditions, where the rags of the poor children are as tattered as the patched walls of the school rooms, education will leave us bereft and no light can spring up from these unwholesome surroundings to be the torch of knowledge in the abysmal darkness of our motherland.

## PART III

### 1

All these discussions on education that have been going on in our country, all these committees that have been set up and the reports that have come out, are evidence of our awareness of the fact that a problem exists. But, apart from the recognition of the fact that a problem exists and the most general treatment of it, there is very little, save for Dr Zakir Hussain's and Mr Wood's essays, to show that the approach to such an issue has to be from the point of view of the child itself, from its inner psychology and the development of its personality in the new world society.

On the other hand, outside India there is a widespread discussion of these problems today, specially from the internal point of view, as a result of the shock administered by the two World Wars and the threat of atomic destruction implicit in a possible third World War. Everywhere, intelligent rank-and-filers clamour for a reorientation of children's education, because they realize how poor were the facilities they themselves enjoyed at school and college and how grave are the results of bad teaching. Of course, public-school-minded conservatives think that this clamour is dangerous, since they consider the whole aim of education to be the production of cadres for the political, diplomatic and military services of the capitalist-imperialist State, while even the liberals feel nervous about the elevation of the common level, because they fear that democratic education will bring standardization. It has not occurred to many of them that a democratic education, informed from within, does not mean either levelling up or down, but is the only genuine source of all social freedom. But we are at the hour of decision and have to make a conscious choice. Are we going to help the evolutionary process or allow the growing generations to destroy each other for lack of a little human understanding?

If the ideal of education is, as I have pointed out above, freedom; if, moreover, the method of education is love and creative labour; if we want to build up human beings who are healthier in mind and body and who can courageously face the problems, the duties and the difficulties of life, then we have to ask ourselves. Does our present education, in spite of the many reports and the big talk, anywhere approximate to these ideals? Does it really educate? Does it make for free, buoyant spirits? Does it develop courage and optimism? Does it promote initiative and independence in the young, and a sense of mutual responsibility among them as world citizens? Are they better men and women than the uneducated? Are they better neighbours, freer from religious prejudices and the weaknesses and vices generally associated with ignorance? Have they got larger visions?

I am afraid, looking around at our middle class, and those others who have been privileged to benefit from the existing education, one cannot honestly give an affirmative answer. Of all the bitter, frustrated, small-minded people in our country, surely our vast unemployed intelligentsia is the most bitter, the most frustrated and small-minded. Inured to a philosophy of pessimism, surrender and abject servility to the elders, our young people have neither cultivated a high respect for their own rights nor much sense of responsibility towards others. The political slogans of the different communal organizations do service in their minds for independent thinking and there is little attempt to search for a coherent life-concept or a philosophy of living. The merry old cavalcade of full-fledged graduates struggles out of the old and new academies every year, hungry for jobs which do not exist, thirsty for patronage which is so niggardly, a procession of suicidal wrecks, drifting with every wind that blows, following any one of the superficial, unrelated ideas with which they have been stuffed, montage men with only a heart and no head, or half a head and no heart, their senses, their bodies, enfeebled, their manhood baulked at every step.

So long as the educational system is unable to develop in its wards a capacity for absorbing useful information, to stimulate the critical faculty and above all to train the emotions, we shall go on seeing this sad spectacle of humanity, uprooted from its natural soil

and soaked in a welter of superficiality, whether this superficiality is taught in English, Hindustani, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese, Pushtu or Oriya. Nor will large doses of chauvinism improve it. In fact, at this period of world history, when the nation state is already entering on the period where it may have to yield sovereignty voluntarily, because if it retains a capitalist structure it cannot help becoming an imperialist, bourgeois, reactionary nation state, the result of an undiluted chauvinism in education would be to create generations of malicious, hate-mongering, uncouth beasts who would become a menace to any comparatively sane world development.

To take the point about education and art, or as Prof. Herbert Read puts it, education through art, we have to note that though drawing and modelling and decorative work are already taught in schools, they are at the moment only sides from the main education and produce less than the dexterity of the craftsman which they are intended to produce. The thing is to cultivate a belief in the primacy of art and to see to it that the teaching of arts and crafts is seriously accepted and introduced into school curricula.

I fancy someone will say at this stage, 'How can this arty-crafty education help to make our children into men?' The point is that the teaching of art trains the senses, the nerves, and their end organs, the eye, the ear, the nose, the skin and the palate, so that these can minister to the thought processes. The intensification of the sensibility, so that it can give form to the heterogeneous phenomena of life, removes the defects in the sense organs. For as is well known the capacities of different people for observing the phenomena of life are very unequal and are often weighed down by the inertia of the receiving instruments. Attention, which is the primary instrument of knowledge wanders.

Now the practice of art by its very nature affords opportunities of sense-improvement, because the child gets accustomed through it to 'notice' sights and sounds and smells, to distinguish them and to learn their qualities, and accumulates in the memory a wealth of information for use in later life.

Further, art helps, through the need to exteriorize forms, to make the child attentive and thus to achieve concentration, the faculty



not only of looking at one thing deeply, but of observing several different strands of phenomena and relating them coherently through the imagination.

As drawing is the activity which weds the hand to the senses and which, through attention and concentration, ensures accuracy of observation, it is also the most important instrument in the training of the senses and by disciplining the lazy, wayward and chaotic impulses purifies the nervous system. Inevitably, the rhythmic flow of the senses, the disciplined control of the organs, releases the repressed desires and longings and removes the emotional obstacles in the way of balanced living. Thus the realization of technical virtuosity, which is the core of the artistic urge, is surprisingly enough also conducive to the triumph of love over hatred.

So that the primary task of our educationists today is first to re-educate themselves and then to reorientate the whole educational system—and devise a centrifugal plan in which what a creative child is and what it must become in society are integrally connected.

## 2

One does not expect fossilized minds, bred in a feudal-cum-servile colonial structure of society, to re-educate themselves. The only hope is that the younger generation of our intellectuals, who are the products of a freedom movement which is now being increasingly divested of those oldies who hypocritically shared the concept of freedom with us for their own selfish, vested interests, will take the lead in urging that the ideal of all education is freedom—a well-integrated social human being, the free mind. And they will have to declare categorically that those of us who love freedom are not afraid of licence.

Once we firmly believe that the motive force of education is freedom, the concrete task of refashioning our existing system will not be impossible. For, so far as the preparation of an adequate shell for a centrifugal educational system goes, the various reports which have come out in our country have already built it. The organic connexion which the Planning Committee sees between primary, secondary and high school education, with its emphasis on science and technology, shows that the schema is already there.

## 3

But there remains, apart from the insistence on freedom as a motive force in education, the need for emphasis on certain considerations about child nature which though simple enough are not always noticed in all their implications.

Now, anyone who has visited a school anywhere in our country, with the possible exception of the activity schools at Shantiniketan or Preet-Nagar, knows that throughout the country our children are made to fit the school and not the school made to fit the children. Certain preconceived notions of what a child ought to be were dictated by some elder statesmen arrogating to themselves omniscience, and we see the spectacle everywhere of children sitting for long periods at a time in the school room, waving their heads up and down and learning some text by rote while the school-master raises his voice or his cane every now and then to see that they do not flag in the repetition of the formulas. The result of several years' schooling of this kind is that even the healthy village child grows up to be a weakling, possessed of a certain amount of useless book knowledge and without any of the sound commonsense of his illiterate forefathers. The standard of success of these children is money and they end up in wage slavery. Immune from much contact with the sun, the earth, the wind and the rain, and made to despise the use of his hands, the child can neither develop into a full human being nor mature into the good agriculturist or artisan he has to be.

Obviously, then, we have to repudiate the self-complacent adult's conception of what a child should be or should not be on which the old schooling has been based; and we have to realize that we are living in an age when social psychology is already a highly developed science. All our contemporary knowledge and insight must help us to understand that a child wants to be itself, and to work out its nature and that it will learn to adapt itself to life more easily if it is allowed self-expression than if it is gagged by 'discipline', 'sound direction', 'moral teaching' and 'religious instruction'. The new attitude requires a belief in the child as essentially good and not the evil being it is supposed to be, a faith in the dynamic, creative energy of every born human being, a final faith exercised through love and tenderness and utmost patience even for the erring, seemingly wicked,

or the difficult or 'problem' child.

But most of the so-called wise parents and teachers of the world will say: 'Life is hard. Surely we must bring up our children to fit into life. How will children brought up in a free school compete with others if there is no discipline? How will they get to be sane human beings in the sober, workaday world?'

Of course, these wiseacres beg the question. If the sober workaday world which they have made for us, whose primary characteristic is a major war every twenty-five years, and whose daily routine are murders, tortures, hangings, neuroses and a series of economic and political crises, then it is better that the children of the new school should not fit into life, but should revolt against its stupidity and disruption in order to create a saner life.

#### 4

But what exactly are the essentials of the child nature on which the new system of education must be founded?

In the opinion of all truly civilized educationists, apart from the basic love elements in a child, there is the dual drive towards 'doing and possessing'. The first of these is most pronouncedly incipient in early childhood and merges into the second in our debased society, where the notion of private property and the exploitation of other people's labour for profit has become the norm. The rationalization of all the primordial instincts towards common good will only be achieved in a socialist world. Meanwhile, any system of education which negotiates the child's love for 'doing' into liberating channels will be likely to achieve the goal of education, freedom.

Now, in recognition of the child's love of 'doing' things has been evolved the principle: 'Learning by doing.' And the best way to do things, the activity which seems to come naturally to children, has been found to be drawing or modelling or craft work. Therefore, the most intelligent educationists in the world such as Froebel, Montessori and Neil have been suggesting the putting of art on the map in the smallest class rooms and in the humblest schools.

This does mean that it is intended to make artists of all children. The shifting of emphasis from 'learning by rote' to 'learning by doing'

owes itself to the growing awareness that every child is gifted with the sense of rhythm which bursts out in song, dance, play, in the handling of colour, in scribbling and, in fact, in every form of imaginative creation. The process of recognition and differentiation of forms and the urge to express our vision of a particular form through signs and symbols, is almost instinctive in childhood. The poetical or graphic description of what we see and feel develops naturally out of first reactions and is akin to the primitive man's embellishment of his tools and his dwelling place, an urge to control phenomena, to master nature. As all these activities afford the child opportunities for self-expression, and a great many of its negative propensities and obstacles are sublimated through this kind of aesthetic indulgence, the practice of arts and crafts in a school can act as a liberating force and as an aid to the sensibility. The result will be a more balanced outlook in every citizen and a higher level of good taste in the community, while those who have great inventive talents will be singled out for the special service of society. Also, this new basis for education will help to enlarge the narrow purview of classical and scientific studies and make for a deeper outlook in the field of general education, thus avoiding the excesses of intellectualism on the one hand and emotionalism on the other, and leading to the development of fully grown individuals, free spirits, devoid of the fanatical hatreds, fears and perversions that have made our world of love into a jungle.

In the particular case of India, where we are beginning a new chapter of political history, we are in the position to give a lead to the whole world because our ancient tradition has equipped us to look at life more deeply. All our philosophical systems inculcated the development of the inherent powers in man as the ideal of education rather than the mere acquisition of knowledge for the sake of knowledge. And the beautiful creations of the folk imagination in our country, the wonderful dances, the intricate designs, the lovely craftwork, with its gay sense of colour and profound harmony, show that even in vocational work our forefathers displayed sensitiveness, accuracy, thought, adaptability and the sheer sense of joy in creation.

## 5

If the deep connexion between art and education be admitted then we have to ask: In what way can we promote the actual integration of these in our education system?

First of all, it is obvious that there must be a complete change in our mental outlook and we must devise a system that will enable our children to proceed from the training of the senses to the development of the mind and heart and of an adequate social sense. This reorientation of our own attitude from the patronizing, supercilious, all knowing elders we generally are, to a friendly, helpful and comradely one, is the first necessity. For, as Mr A. S. Neil wisely insists, 'there are few difficult or problem children, there are only problem parents and problem teachers'.

Once this change of heart has been achieved there are certain other psychological considerations, which must inform the curriculum of the school in order to reform the present system.

The stimulation of the senses in its own turn helps the training of the mental and moral faculties. For the faculty of observation brings together the raw material in which we discover relatedness. All the five senses of the scientist, for instance, and his improved sixth sense of microscopes and other instruments, offer information of a minute character which is later worked up into deductive formulae. But children, encouraged early to know objects through drawing or craft work or creative example, not as a task but out of curiosity and interest, will master these objects more easily than in any other way. If they are asked to know its exact shade, its glow, the shape of its petals, and what happens to it if it is crushed, they will know the flower so completely that its peculiarities are indelibly impressed on their memories. Our elders must realize that a child which is trampling on a bed of pansies, or crushing a rose, is not necessarily destroying these but exercising its creative gifts, that is to say, it is unconsciously learning what these flowers are like when subjected to a certain treatment, whether they hit back or bite or remain passive.

Similarly, experience of forms in early childhood helps the memory and imagination, if the process of remembering is not the conscious and mechanical repletion of text-book lessons but the

unconscious observation of differences through comparison and contrast. Thus, if the likenesses and differences of things are revealed to children through nature study, collection of beautiful stones, shells and the counting of stars, the laws of genus and species could be taught them more easily and the scientific attitude developed as a permanent part of the equipment of their minds. The gift of metaphor that arises from the fusion of subtle judgment, argument by analogy and imagination, are all built up through the early acquisition of vivid sense data. In fact, there can be no poetry or imaginative creation without adequate training of the child's capacity of forming mental images of things seen or felt, without stimulation of the faculty for association of ideas, and without the coming to be of a delicate sense of the nuances and undercurrents of experience. And, equally, conceptual thought, or reasoning, cannot be developed except through an emphasis on accurate observation of facts, on having all the facts of a case and on eliminating the margins of error. The usual way of training the logical faculty in our seminaries is through textbooks of logic, but this is a stupid and formalistic method because it substitutes book knowledge for knowledge of life itself, where reasoning is necessary, natural and unconscious. A more coherent way of approaching abstruse knowledge is to teach the child to notice examples of the working of universal laws outside the classroom, to encourage him to make inferences from facts and from his current experience of the relations of identity, cause and effect, etc.

## 6

Of course, all this psychological insight into the methods of teaching children will be of little avail if the main psychological fact goes on being ignored in practice, however it might be appreciated in theory, that no real education can be given except in the mother tongue of the child. Language, it must be understood, is kinetic; it is, like bodily movement or gesture, an intimate part of the physiology and mental make-up of the child. A deliberate neglect of this fact, resulting in the undue emphasis on English in our education, not only violated against the first principles of education but brought about its inevitable nemesis—the ruin of generations of our young men and women and the denationalization of the whole of our

middle class. Now, every one will welcome attempts to eliminate it from primary, elementary and secondary school teaching. But there must be a balanced view about the advantages of retaining it in higher school and college education as an optional subject. And there must be some attempt made at an improvement in the teaching of English and in raising the standard attained at the Matriculation level, because as a language of international exchange it is probably one of the few assets in the balance-sheet of our prolonged slavery.

## 7

I fancy that if a model primary school could suddenly come to be by some miracle, it would be a clean, wholesome place in the loveliest surroundings, where a child would go to play rather than to learn, but where it would learn more because learning is more interesting through play than through academic lessons. Such a school would have a cinema hall to show films specially prepared by experts on visual education; it would have radio sets in every classroom, because training by the ear brings appreciation of facts as well as suggestion more deeply to children; and it would have a theatre where children would perform plays written by themselves. Such a school would have been beautifully planned and built as a new kind of cultural centre, with a miniature museum and botanical garden attached to it as well as a library and a sports ground, replete with all the fixtures of a gymnasium. Such a school would be run by a democratically elected committee in which the students and teachers and parents would be equally well represented. And the whole spirit of the school would be egalitarian, without the teacher arrogating to himself any airs of superiority like Oliver Goldsmith's proverbial schoolmaster. In fact, the teacher in such a school would be the most hard worked, having to do what the children want and not always making the children do what he wants. Cleanliness, order and discipline would not be enforced by the head-master but through bye-laws made by the school parliament, and antisocial acts by any members of the school would be judged by a democratically elected Jury on a fixed day every week—punishment being awarded not with a view to oppressing and torturing but to reforming the psychology of the erring individual. Classes would be held according to a time-

table which gives the bulk of the school hours to play, or to teaching in which the play function has an important place, and attendance at the academic lessons would not be demanded as much as willingly given by the children, no reproofs being administered to any of them if they choose to absent themselves from a lesson and prefer to play football, cricket or kabadi. For children always make up the deficiencies in their intellectual equipment when they feel the curiosity to master a subject, far more quickly than if they are forced to learn something at a time when they are interested in other things. Such a school would, of course, be co-educational, and boys and girls would begin to grow up as humanly equal, aware of the naturalness of the differences of sex and without the invidious distinction of male superiority and female inferiority that at present corrodes the basis of our national life and through which one half of the nation, the female, is condemned to have no voice in the running of the country. In this way, the perversions that arise from the denial of sex would be sublimated into a healthy awareness of sex; and the roots of life, which are poisoned by the ignorance and stupidity of a puritanical society, would burgeon as naturally as vegetables and animals and flowers. Such a school would be like a large, noisy family, growing up around a wise head master or headmistress, uninhibited, free, intelligent, non-aggressive and cooperative, a community in which every member has natural rights as well as responsibilities and in which no one bullies any one else, in which not even the *pater* or *mater familias* has the right to say an untoward word to the least member of the household merely because of the supposed advantage of seniority in years or wisdom. Such a school would lay the foundations of a wholesome social personality in every child and it would go towards making the individual a new kind of individual for a new kind of world.

## 8

The psychological considerations I have put forward thus all point to the need for revolutionizing our education system, specially the primary school education, for it is there that the basis for the whole subsequent life of the child is laid.

But the ideology of this revolution must not be snippets of

borrowed ideas. The whole scheme should be worked out as an elastic mechanism for achieving the maximum degree of freedom for the human personality in a humanist world in which the highest human and social values prevail, without any ulterior sanctions derived from the whims of religious cranks or fanatical individualists.

Let me put down what is a minimum basis for such education in our country:

First of all, we must really and genuinely recognize the rights of all our peoples to free primary education. This basic principle is the hinge on which our cultural development rests. And we cannot hope to discover a new way of life unless from the kindergarten to the secondary school and university stage, literacy and cultural awareness open up our people to the rudiments of modern knowledge.

Secondly, as we have inherited a large legacy of ignorance from the past and have one of the largest populations of illiterate adults in the world, we must create special schools for teaching them quickly, preferably through radio and visual education methods. And we should not rest content until we have absolutely wiped out illiteracy in our vast country.

Thirdly, it should be recognized that the ultimate financial responsibility for all education in our country must rest on the State.

Fourthly, as the State remains neutral in matters of religion, so it must not sanction any religious education in State, or State-aided schools.

Fifthly, all education must be in the mother tongue of the children in the various linguistic zones of India.

And, in general, we must keep in view that what we are aiming at as a cultural revolution through which the variegated inheritance of our ancient land and those of other countries may be recaptured and developed into a beautiful unity in diversity, such as may afford a rich example to the other multi-national States of the world. We must see to it that every one of our citizens has the opportunity to go to the roots of experience and become a world citizen. Even sick and mentally defective children, the deaf, the dumb and the blind, have a claim to be taught. So that while intensifying the local and regional characteristics of our culture patterns, we must emphasize the primary

value of man and love for man as such. And we must infuse into our peoples, the sense of the dignity of creative labour and the qualities which go with it, as, for instance, love, which makes one give something to oneself but also a great deal by way of devotion to others; respect for truth which is the approximation of all truths; and poetry, and courage.

I am afraid I do not think that it will be easy to bring about this revolution in less than a generation. For though a few individuals of sensibility may found their own schools and admit to them the children of well-to-do parents, these schools will only remain examples of what can be done in this regard and will not be able to fulfil the ideals of a democratic, humanist, free primary education for everyone. Our vast public, being illiterate, will not know how to choose between the imbecility which is taught in the schools and real education. Specially, as the leaders of thought in our country themselves derive from a system of education which has been at one pole an imitation of the British and at another pole a complete reaction against the West and a harking back to the ideal of a supposed golden age of the Vedic period. So that what is needed is a programme planned by a radical Government which goes down to the root of the problem with a generous purse and great honesty of purpose.

## 9

I think in some ways the question of the teachers who are to help to change our education system is the pivot of our present problem. And if we can devise some means of tackling this we may be able to introduce new bearings in our education system and thereby initiate the process of change, which will ultimately alter the mental and moral outlook of our people.

The Sargent Report, which, as I have said, was a rationalization of previous schemes, was alive to this practical issue when it said: 'Progress cannot outstrip the supply of teachers.' But it took a far too tardy view of our needs, because, in view of the various difficulties, financial as well as academic, it estimated that the goal can be reached in forty years. Perched in New Delhi or Simla and riding on the hard shell of the bureaucratic tortoise, it was impossible for any one under

the old regime to take a different view of the responsibilities of bringing about the transformation we desire. As Mr Kodanda Rao, of the Servants of India Society, recently pointed out, in forty years India would, according to the speed of application of the Sargent scheme, have reached the stage of educational development of most of the other nations before the war. As these nations are, in view of their own paucities, struggling to evolve quicker, much higher and subtler methods of education, we should still remain behind. But are we congenital idiots, that we cannot at this new stage of development make a short cut to the very best schooling and come abreast of other world citizens? Or are we so burdened with a sense of inferiority that we are afraid of raising our standards? Do we not realize that while other nations have been experimenting we have been kept back, and that we must regard the building up of the new healthy, vital and humane generations of the future as an emergency problem if we want to avoid the peril of succumbing to the violent chaos of European life and to the petty fanaticisms and racial hatreds which have already spread among us from the West?

Mr Kodanda Rao suggests increasing the number of competent potential teachers by making professional education part of the Matriculation, the Intermediate and the B.A. courses and making it compulsory in the Matriculation and optional in the others.

In my opinion this is a very useful proposal, provided that we keep in mind the truth of the Persian proverb, *Neem Hakim khatra-i-jan* (a half doctor is a danger to life), that is to say, provided we remember that for the new kind of education we envisage, an education which creates fully developed human beings, we have to have teachers trained for their new responsibilities in a new manner. It is possible that a nucleus of this staff can be formed by revising the existing curricula of the Matric course and later by sending selected scholars to be trained at the most advanced schools in Scandinavia, Russia, Britain and America every year, so that these can, in their turn, come back and teach the science and art of teaching in our existing schools and colleges to would-be teachers. But in sending cadres abroad we must keep in mind that not every seminary beyond the seas is capable of giving us instruction in the new ways of teaching. I am inclined to believe that the greater sympathy of women for

young children makes women better teachers, and that, therefore, larger numbers of women matriculates ought to be equipped with the training to teach.

The teaching profession will, however, never be popular unless the remuneration of teachers is immediately raised from the shamefully low standard of twenty-five rupees upwards at which it has been fixed in the past to a good living wage. In fact, no plan of conscription of students, to serve as teachers before they graduate, can succeed unless they are paid stipends while they are serving as conscripted student teachers.

Mr Kodanda Rao's suggestion for mobilizing the whole of India's youth to tackle the problem of mass education by accepting conscription, is the only speedy way to get ahead and it is a great improvement on Sir John Sargent's plans of expanding the present system by opening more special institutions to produce a larger output of teachers at a higher cost, which is never forthcoming from a budget in which education is generally treated as a pretty Cinderella without much practical value.

## 10

Altogether the shifting of emphasis from the English idea of specialism to a more unbuttoned, more rounded, human outlook is necessary in the present world, for the results of the nineteenth century division of labour have been to bring about physicists who do not know any sociology and intellectuals who are supposed to be above politics and completely above life's struggle, so that the most important thinkers of the world feel impotent in the face of any gangster who can organize evil by a coup d'etat with the help of the armed forces of a country, and add to his wickedness an open suppression of truth, till he brings about on the void of ignorance among the masses, a state in which he can corrode the very basis of human existence.

We in India, with our tradition of the idea made act, cannot allow this betrayal by the intellectual of his functions as a human being. Hitherto, of course, the presence of alien rule has kept the vast mass of our people in the deepest darkness by deliberately refusing us the benefits of free education. But, as we come into our own, politically, our responsibilities are inevitably bigger. For we

are witnessing today the failure of education all over the world to bring about a humane civilization, devoid of beastliness, hatred and fear. Some of us are convinced that we are seeing this disruption, carnage and war around us because the so-called civilized men of Europe chose to thwart and hamper the integral education of children by rules and conventions made in the interests of their imperial systems. It is the duty of all those who have borne the burden of the useless education imposed on us by these Imperialist masters, and who have now shed it to an extent, to inquire into the grey disease of complacency which possesses us in spite of ourselves. It is incumbent on us to correct our old errors and discard the prejudices, which have accrued to us from the past. It is necessary for our very survival as a part of the human race and as the builders of a new sense of values, for us to criticize our habit of looking at things mechanically from the outside, and to seek deeper knowledge of what it is we want to make of our children and what kind of world we want to make of this earth of ours, of our India. We must rescue ourselves from the lumber room of dead sorrows and face our children, so that they are not able to say to us indignantly, as our generation has been saying to our parents: 'What kind of world have you brought us to!' It needs no Jeremiah to tell us today that mankind is threatened by miseries and horrors more terrible than those which Goya painted or Henry Moore ever drew. Have we forgotten that we are capable of splendours as well as miseries?

## APPENDIX<sup>1</sup>

Notes on Child Art by Pulinbihari Dutt

*(It is the purity of vision and simplicity of expression that lends to the creations of children a charm and a quality that puts them on a unique pedestal. It is impossible and futile to judge their work by the adult standard. But if the qualities of true art lie in purity of vision and boldness and simplicity of expression, then the world of art will do well to study and learn from the modest works of children. The happiness that filled the child's heart while covering his sheet with the bright and lively shapes of his dream world shines out from these screens and should transmit itself to every one who enters this hall without prejudice and with sympathetic understanding.)*

### SYSTEMATIC STUDY OF CHILD ART

#### 1. DEVELOPMENT OF VISION.

(Drawing of child under 6 years of age)

Artist's vision is a complicated process demanding a combined visual and intellectual effort. On one end of the process stands the actual picture or the mind picture of an object, on the other its representation or symbol on paper or plastic form. The quality and intensity of this visual process develops gradually in children and depends on age and mental abilities. It is one of the main duties of education to further and assist this development by the child's own efforts without interference from outside.

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1. Reproduced by courtesy of Chandabhai A. Muchhala, Hon. Secy., Child Art Society, 178 Bazar Gate St., Bombay-1.



1. **SCRIBBLES** (Age up to 3 years)  
In this the earliest stage the child scribbles some lines first and gives a name to his creation afterwards (Drawing first, naming afterwards). Most drawings in this stage are unintelligible.
2. **FORMS** (Age up to 4 years)  
In this stage the child begins with an idea and draws afterwards (Naming first, drawing afterwards). He attempts to define objects by their forms. His drawings are intelligible.
3. **COMPOSITION** (Age up to 5 years)  
The sense of composition dawns in drawings of this stage in which the child tries to express a relation between objects as seen in nature. The child draws, for instance, a house and trees near to it and the ground on which they stand; he draws the sky overhead with sun and moon. Thus a whole composition is created.  
Dull children make a catalogue of unrelated objects.
  - (a) Rudimentary Composition
  - (b) Advance Composition
  - (c) Clever Composition
  - (d) Dull Composition

## II. CHILD SYMBOLISM.

(Age 5 to 10 years)

The child, in expressing his ideas in drawings, makes use of various symbols peculiar to childhood. Most of the symbols have been formed as a result of his perceptual immaturity and by his inclination to draw not only what he sees but also what he knows. These symbols are signs of the child's fertile imagination and his free vision.

1. **KNOWLEDGE PICTURES:**  
The child draws a house as he sees it; he also knows there are people, furniture or a lamp inside the house, so he draws them.

This house appears to be transparent. He draws roots of trees in the ground, water in the well; the sky as a line overhead, the ground below and empty space between them. Food, when consumed, is shown inside human or animal figures (Compare Primitive Art).

2. **FREE ANGLE OR VIEW:**
  - (a) True perspective is absent in child art. In order to achieve clarity of design the child changes his angle of view once or more in one picture. He draws all the four legs of a table jutting out in two directions, or the door at one side of the house projected into the plane of the front to make it visible. The two lines of wheels in a train are shown below and on top of the carriages. (Compare Jain Paintings of Gujarat. The second eye in the profile face is shown by projecting it out.)
  - (b) Figures are arranged in a ring or on both sides of a line. Two hockey teams facing each other, for instance, are not seen from one viewpoint, but from two with an angle of 180 degrees between them.
3. **EMPHASIS BY SIZE:**  
Objects of interest or importance assume bigger size in proportion to the rest of the picture—a very common feature in the drawings of younger children (and of all primitive people).
4. **ANIMATION:**  
The child imagines the sun and moon (and often other objects) as living persons and hence adds human symbols (faces) to them.
5. **SIMULTANEOUSNESS OF EVENTS:**  
In order to depict the sequence of an event the child draws several different phases simultaneously in the same picture. The fall of a boy from a hill is shown in three phases—(i) the boy on top of the hill, (ii) in mid air, and (iii) being removed on a stretcher at the bottom. To show the flight of a bullet several bullets are shown in close succession to symbolize its movements. (Compare futurist art of the west.)

## 6. SCHEMA:

Child's schema of Man and House at different ages. The average child up to the age of 10 follows some set Schema of objects in his drawings. Schemata vary according to age. Talented children outgrow schematic representation early.

*III. PSYCHOLOGY OF CHILD ART.*

Children's drawings are like windows through which the initiated can peep into the not easily accessible mind and soul of a child. Child Art, in consequence, presents an inexhaustible mine of information to the psychologist and educationist.

## 1. WISH-FULFILMENT:

The Child paints things as he wishes them to be if he is not satisfied with their natural appearance. Even if he borrows the form from nature the child will apply colours to satisfy his wishes (coloured rain; gay, brightly coloured animals. Compare Modern Western artists. Franz Marc's Red and Blue Horses.)

## 2. EXPRESSION OF THE MYSTERIOUS AND THE SUPERNATURAL:

The child is usually not inclined to introduce the mysterious or supernatural into his drawing, the reason being, most probably, fear. However, he does so if asked to. The child seems to have very vivid but fearful conceptions of Ghosts and Raksasas. A mystery seems to surround in his mind the personality of the thief. Child's conception of the fairy, though mysterious, is always happy.

## BACKWARD CHILDREN:

Children's drawings are indications of their general intelligence. The drawings of backward children show the subnormal development of their mind.

*IV. EXPRESSION IN CHILD ART.*

The power of expression in Child Art is strong and highly developed. It works by association of definite colours and forms with various experiences. Experiments produce rich material for study.

## 1. SYNAESTHESIA:

The chart shows the results of experiments with a number of children. The children were asked to indicate the colour they associated with various experiences of the senses such as taste, smell, touch, sound and with emotions such as joy, sorrow, fear and anger.

## 2. EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS:

The synaesthetic experiment proves that children can associate particular colours with particular emotions. The same children were then asked to express emotions in pictorial form. Apart from the interesting conceptions, the striking feature of these pictures is that in most cases the associate colour is conspicuous in the composition. In the exhibits the associate colour as indicated by the child is shown on the margin.

## 3. EXPRESSION OF MUSIC:

Children can express music in terms of concrete form and colours. Three kinds of instrumental music were played to a group of girls of 11 to 14 years of age and aroused in their minds vivid imageries which were depicted with great joy. Gay melodies were interpreted with gay colours and significant movements.

*V. CHILD IMAGERY.*

Stories and poems animate a child's phantasy and evoke vivid imageries which can find expression in drawings and paintings of great power and beauty. The imagination of the child develops the raw material of story or poem in a very individual manner. The exhibits are the results of a poem and a story recited to two groups of

children.

- (1) Poem Developed in Pictures.
- (2) Story Developed in Pictures.

### *VI. AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES IN CHILD ART.*

Not every factor in Child Art can be reduced to some aesthetic principle or value. Some children, however, have a definite predilection for certain colours, colour combination or composition which have purely aesthetic significance and are related to the child's development.

#### **1. LOVE FOR REPETITION AND CONTRAST:**

During the period in which the child works with schemata and symbols he shows a strong preference for repetition of objects of the same shape, size or colour with faint indication of rhythmical organization. This automatism is common to all young children but more frequent in dull children.

The possibilities of colour contrasts and contrasts of shape are fully exploited by children.

#### **2. SENSE FOR COLOUR AND PATTERN:**

The child has a natural tendency to introduce the pattern principle into composition of varied kind and not only in merely decorative pattern designs.

### *VII. ENVIRONMENT IN CHILD ART.*

Environment is undoubtedly the strongest factor that influences a child's mind and thereby his drawings which are records of his experiences. A child paints preferably the gaiety of life and beauty of nature. It will be observed that the world of reality undergoes considerable transmutation in the child's art in which the imaginative factors of wishes and aspirations are of equal or greater importance than the hard facts of the outside world.

- (1) OBJECTS OF COMMON INTEREST
- (2) SCENES FROM LIFE
- (3) SCENES FROM NATURE.

### *VIII. THE PRESENT WAR IN CHILD ART*

Children, always alive to the events and happenings of their surroundings, cannot escape from the overwhelming influence of the present War. Though not actual witnesses of combat, their imagination is fed by talk, description and illustrations of War. Graphic representation of great reality is the result.

### *IX. ART AND CHILD ART.*

The comparison of Child Art with other forms of Art is a fascinating subject of study and research. Many principles which appear in child art can be recognized in primitive art and are claimed as principles of general validity by several modern art movements.

#### **(1) PRIMITIVE ART AND CHILD ART:**

In the art of primitive people we find the same spontaneous manifestation of artistic instinct as we find in the art of children. The primitive artist follows at first some schema in the representation of human or animal forms. In a higher stage he introduces forms gained by direct observation of nature. He shares with the child accuracy of observation, rejection of irrelevant detail, complete disregard of perspective. He draws not only what he sees but also what he knows, even if it could not be visible in reality. He shows a love for repetition and pattern.

#### **(2) MODERN WESTERN ART AND CHILD ART:**

The free and unsuppressed expression of unsophisticated children has been compared to the complete freedom of expression in several schools of modern painting, especially in surrealist art. The surrealist artist claims complete freedom from the actual appearances of things, and subjects his creation not to the laws of visual appearances but to his own order of visual experience. He changes his angle of view several times in one painting. He may show a face in profile but features both eyes, thus combining side and frontal view. He may analyse and dissect

a natural shape and reassemble it according to his own imagination and according to the necessity of his design. He lives in his own realm of imagination into which the realities of the outer world may or may not enter. He shares with the child critical and discriminate observation and use of natural form. He often strives to make visual the obscure images of the sub-conscious mind and in the process creates a surrealist or super realist world. But it must be remembered that whereas the child's transmutations and imageries are spontaneous and unconscious, the modern artist is deliberate and conscious.

#### *X. CHILDREN AS ARTISTS*

Not every creation by a child is a work of art. Child Art as a term is not used for the masterpieces of child prodigies but for the free creative efforts of children in general. It is natural that some children more than others show signs of real artistic qualities in the strong co-ordinated composition of their paintings, the effective use of colour and the emotional and dramatic power of their imageries. This true artistic talent in children may or may not survive the adolescent stage and create true artists in later life. It is not the object of child art education to produce child artists, but to assist every child in the free development of his vision and imagination, to intensify his power of expression and to stimulate his joy of creation. However, if children produce real masterpieces, their charm and beauty cannot fail to impress every lover of art as this collection will prove.